NOTE XXVII.

ON POTAMOGALE VELOX DU CHAILLU

BY

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The other day I received among other animals from the Congo a fine skin of the wonderful *Potamogale velox* Du Chaillu.

As to the color of the fur it agrees very well with the descriptions given by Du Chaillu, Barboza du Bocage and Dobson, much less with Allman's.

After Du Chaillu [1]) the type-specimen had »the color above dark, shining brown, lighter on the side, pale yellowish white below, almost pure white on the throat and chin and along the edge of the upper lip".

Barboza du Bocage's »peau en très-bon état" was colored as follows [2]): »le dessus et les côtés de la tête, le dos et les flancs, la moitié supérieure de la première portion de la queue et la portion apicale de cet organe en entier d'un brun foncé, comme chez notre *Loutre vulgaire*. Les lèvres supérieures, le dessous de la tête, le cou, la poitrine, le ventre et la moitié inférieure de la première portion de la queue entièrement blanches. Sur les flancs les poils blancs sont mêlés aux poils bruns, d'où résulte une nuance moins foncée. La face externe des membres est, en partie, brune".

1) Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. Vol. VII, 1861, p. 362.
2) P. Z. S. L. 1865, p. 402, with figures of the skull.

Dobson's [1]) description runs as follows: »the general colour of the fur of the whole upper surface of the head, body and tail, and of the outer sides of the limbs is brown; but the longer hairs which project from the dense under fur show a violet metallic lustre by reflected light; the under surface of the body, from the end of the mandible to the anus, is yellowish white".

Professor Allman's [2]) specimen had »the color of the upper side of the head, with the back and the entire tail, and the outer side of the fore and hind limbs dark brown. The whole of the underside of the body, from the extremity of the nose to the vent is brownish yellow".

Now it may be that — Prof. Allman's specimen having been preserved in spirits — it has somewhat lost the beautiful pure white or yellowish white color of the underparts, I however can hardly believe that the color of a bright colored specimen can ever turn into a brownish yellow (see description) or yellow (see plate) as we ought to accept if Allman's specimen has been exactly described and figured after life. There is however another prepondérant reason to believe that Allman's *Potamogale* has been very badly described or is not a specimen of *P. velox* at all, and the reason is:

that, according to du Bocage, *P. velox* has 40 teeth, the dental formula after Dobson is i. $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$, c. $\frac{1-1}{1-1}$, pm. $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$, m. $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$ or 40 like du Bocage's statement, but that Allman's specimen had a skull with the dental formula i. $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$, c. $\frac{0-0}{0-0}$, p. $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$, m. $\frac{3-3}{3-3}$ = 36 teeth — and Prof. Allman has very minutely studied the dentition, as the suppressed canine teeth were a puzzle to him (see l. c. p. 6).

1) A monograph of the Insectivora, systematic and anatomical, 1883, Pt. II, p. 98; with plates.

2) Trans. Zool. Soc. Vol. VI, 1869, p. 4; with figures and plates.

I am indebted to Professor Hubrecht for the kindness with which he placed the material from the Utrecht-collection at my disposal for examination. A skin from the Congo without tail and extremities is a good deal larger than a perfectly complete skin with skull from the same locality. Both skins present the underparts of the body colored whitish like Du Chaillu's, Du Bocage's, Dobson's and our specimens; the skull is armed with 40 teeth, so that Allman's specimen again stands isolated.

In conclusion, if Allman's individual has not been decolored by the action of spirits and has the skull not mutilated, and if Allman's description and figure of the animal are correct, we are obliged to accept that — his specimen may be a *Potamogale* — it very likely cannot belong to *P. velox*, and therefore ought a new specific title: in the latter case I call it *P. Allmani.*

The Utrecht-, as well as the Leyden-specimens, have, like all other specimens of *P. velox*, the hind limbs syndactylous, a very remarkable arrangement, only known — as far as I am aware — to exist in *Hylobates syndactylus* and among Marsupials.

Observation. Dr. Dobson [1]) has mentioned and figured the long stiff vibrissae springing from the sides of the muzzle aud arising from large hair-follicules, arranged in horizontal rows, which, by their size, cause the peculiar width of the muzzle. I find a pair of such long stiff vibrissae arising from large hair-follicules placed on the chin; these organs are perfectly preserved in our specimen, meanwhile in the mutilated specimen of the Utrecht-collection the vibrissae have been cut off, so that only the large hair-follicules are present, and in the stuffed specimen of that collection, the vibrissae having been removed, there are two openings in the skin.

1) l. c. p. 98, pl. IX, fig. 11.